



MT. VERNON

COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

“Engage, Educate, and Empower Today’s Students”

March 3, 2020

At Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation (MVCSC), the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff are our top priorities. With the recently elevated discussion of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the news, we want to take a moment to share the district’s preparedness and reinforce preventative safety measures.

As a school district, we are closely monitoring the situation and taking guidance from the Hancock County Health Department, the Indiana State Department of Health, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We receive regular updates from these agencies. MVCSC is following the guidance and expectations established by the CDC and the Indiana State Department of Health.

There are **no** suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools. According to the CDC, the risk to Hoosiers remains low at this time. If a confirmed case of COVID-19 was to occur at some point in time, MVCSC would follow the recommendations and directives from our partners at the Indiana State Department of Health, the Hancock County Health Department and the Indiana Department of Education. We would then communicate those steps to our school community. In addition, we will monitor all travel for any school activities that may be affected.

MVCSC staff continues to be proactive in our thorough cleaning/disinfecting practices throughout our schools during this cold and virus season. Know that our custodians, teachers and all staff are working together to help prevent the spread of germs by disinfecting their classrooms and reminding students about the importance of proper hygiene, such as frequent hand washing. We want to remind parents/guardians that if your child is sick, please keep them home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without medication.

MVCSC will continue to work with our partners at the Hancock County Department of Health and the Indiana State Department of Health as they monitor and manage the current situation with both the flu and COVID-19. Please be assured that MVCSC staff will continue to keep an eye on illness in our schools, as is our standard practice..

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our students and staff safe. More information on the coronavirus is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus> and at the excellent Indiana State Department of Health website found at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>. We also have attached an information flyer from the Hancock County Health Department for your reference as well.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping our students, staff and community healthy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jack Parker
MVCSC Superintendent

Mrs. Tracy Furnas
Mt. Vernon Corporation Nurse

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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Schools Information for School Nurses and Administrators

Background

Many parts across the world are experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus. This virus can spread from person-to-person and the number of cases detected in the United States and many other countries is growing. Currently, the immediate risk to the general public in the United States is considered to be low.

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus that was not identified in humans before December 2019.

What are common symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It takes 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill. COVID-19 is a new disease, and we are learning more each day about its symptoms and how it is spread.

How does the virus spread?

Most often, it is spread from person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Who should seek medical evaluation for COVID-19?

Students, staff, and volunteers who are:

- Ill with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have traveled from China in the last 14 days
- Ill with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have been identified by public health officials as a recent close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or had recent close contact with someone who is being evaluated for COVID-19 infection.

What should I do if I suspect a student, staff member, or volunteer is at risk for COVID-19?

If a student, staff member, or volunteer meets the above criteria, it is important to place them in a private room away from others and ask them to wear a face mask. Immediately notify your local health department. They will provide you with guidance.

Should children returning from China stay home from school for 14 days?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all travelers from China (including school students, staff and volunteers) arriving in the United States AFTER February 2, 2020 at 2 p.m. stay at home, away from others, and monitor their health for 14 days. This measure was put in place because of the increasing number of cases of COVID-19 in China. If these individuals develop a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing during this 14-day period, they should call their local health department and healthcare provider to tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.

What can I do to prevent COVID-19 in my school?

ISDH recommends that schools increase education on respiratory and hand hygiene. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses.

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected against influenza.
- Be aware that facemasks are not needed for the general public.

In addition, it is recommended that schools take these additional measures:

- Remind faculty, staff, and students that when they are ill, they should remain home; persons who have been ill should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to classes and work.
- Ensure that your leave policies are flexible and non-punitive for both students and staff.
- Adopt sick leave policies that allow employees to stay home when ill. Develop other flexible leave policies that allow employees to stay home and work remotely when sick or caring for sick household members. Make sure that employees are aware of these policies.
- Continue to encourage welcoming environments for ALL members of our community.
- Always check reliable sources for up-to-date, accurate information about COVID-19; local, state and federal authorities are listed below.

Cleaning and disinfecting procedures

Special processes beyond routine cleaning are not necessary nor recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched

often, such as bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles and phones.

For more information:

- Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) • <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National) • <http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International) • <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>